NATIONAL OF Sanitized Approved F<u>or Release CIA-RDP75-0</u> The Invasion Fiasco FOIAb3b

What Went Wrong in the Bay of Pigs Landings

When President Kennedy took office in January 1961, he found on his desk in the White House an Elsenhower Administration policy paper, known as the "Castro-must-go" paper, which ruled that the Communist infection in Cuba must be eliminated and gave a detailed plan for

The document called for an invasion of Cuba by Cuban exiles with United States air cover and logistic support. In fact the invasion had actually been scheduled to take place in November 1960 but was called off by President Eisenhower when President-elect Kennedy declined to assoclate himself with the action.

The new President faced a grave choice. To call off the invasion scheme. might have demoralized the anti-Castro exiles and opened the new Administration to charges of appeasement. Mr. Kennedy himself, in his television debates with Mr. Nixon during the campaign, had advocated open aid to the non-Batista and anti-Castro rebels and complained that the Eisenhower Administration, was not doing enough about Castro.

On the other hand, to back the exiles with massive United States air and naval forces would be widely regarded as oldfashioned Yankee imperialism. It would provoke resentment in Latin America. where, as Adlai Stevenson stated in the report on his South American 10-nation tour, the "principle of nonintervention is a religion." It might even provoke Soviet Russia to intervene and perhaps touch off World War III.

Advisers Divided

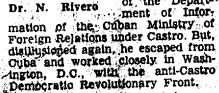
A spirited debate took place within the Administration on what course to adopt between these two extremes. . . President Kennedy had, from the beginning, strong doubts about the operation and was opposed to the direct participation of american armed forces in the venture. His military and civilian advisers were divided. While the Central Intelligence Agency and the Pentagon favored the plan devised during the Eisenhower Administration, the State Department and

About the Author

This story of why the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba failed in April 1961 was written by Dr. Nicolas Rivero,

a former Castro aide who fled from Cuba.

Dr. Rivero was a Cuban delegate to the Organization of American States Batista. under but resigned in disgust and worked in support of the Cas-. tro revolution. He became head of the Depart-



His account is reprinted, by permission, from his book, Castro's Cuba: An American Dilemma, published in 1962 by Robert B. Luce. Inc., Washington, D.C.

for action. The President also was informed that the president of Guatemala was under heavy political pressure from left-wingers there to evict the Cuban exiles from their camps. The CIA insisted that Cuba was ripe for revolt against the Castro regime and that the Cuban Army of Liberation in Guatemala was at the peak of training and determination to fight.

On March 29, after making some changes in the plan, President Kennedy flashed the green light from the White House: One of the President's modifica-

light bombers. One plane attacked Castro's main air base at San Antonio, built by the United States during World War II. The other plan worked over Havena's Camp Liberty, Fidel's main military head quarters. A similar B-26 raid took place on the military airport at Santiago de Cuba, 500 miles away in Oflente Prove

U.N. Hears Charges

The air strike came at the time when the United Nations had before it a Cuban charge that the United States was waging "undeclared war" against the Castro gov-ernment. In the United Nations, Raul Roa, Cuba's foreign minister, accused the United States of staging the air strike. . . .

Mr. Bievenson, United States ambassador to the United Nations, denied cate-gorically that the United States bombed the Cuban airfield and cited the Cuban markings on one of the planes that had landed at the Miami International Airport with its engine nicked by bullets. But that night Mr. Stevenson threatened to resign and demanded that there be no more air attacks. The President then called our the strike, which was to have taken place just before the landing.

It must be added that the cancellation of the second B-26 strike was only the last stage in the process of scaling down the Cuban invasion plan. Much earlier even before President Kennedy's inaugu ration on Jan. 20, 1961, influential liberal tired to scuttle any plans for an invasion of Cuba. Shortly after the elections Sen Mike Mansfield said that he hoped tha President-elect Kennedy would be receptive "to every opportunity" for negotiations of United States-Cuban differences, and weeks later intelligence officers of the anti-Castro Cuban Democratic Revolu tionary Front reported that Mr. Steven son had been talking with Foreign Minis ter Raul Roa at the Chilean Delegation to the United Nations in New York.

Dinlomatic Speculation

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